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Daily Highlights

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Security Council extends MINURSO mandate until 31 January 1996; calls on parties in Western Sahara to cease all delaying actions and cooperate with Mission.

* Security Council calls for immediate cease-fire and cessation of hostilities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

* General Assembly adopts agenda with 164 items for its fiftieth session.

* International Court of Justice dismisses New Zealand's action to halt French nuclear tests in South Pacific.

* Donors to meet in Brussels on 25 September to mobilize resources for peace process and development in Angola.

* Somali faction frees last of international aid workers held captive in Baidoa.

* IFAD Executive Board recommends micro-lending and grants be increased by 5 per cent to $434 million in 1996.

* UNCTAD Trade and Development Board recommends UNCTAD IX be convened in South Africa in April 1996.

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The Security Council today extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31 January 1996. It requested the Secretary-General to report by 15 January 1996 on progress towards the implementation of the Settlement Plan, stating whether or not the transitional period could begin by 31 May 1996. It noted that if the conditions necessary for the start of the transitional period were not in place before 31 January, the Secretary-General would present alternative options for consideration, including the possible withdrawal of the Mission.

(more)

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By unanimously adopting resolution 1017 (1995), the Council called on the parties to work with the Secretary-General and MINURSO to implement the Settlement Plan. They should abandon their insistence on strict reciprocity in the operation of identification centres and cease all other procrastinating actions which could further delay the holding of the referendum. The Council stressed the need to accelerate implementation of the Settlement Plan and urged the Secretary-General to examine ways of reducing the Mission's operational costs.

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The Security Council last night called on all parties and others concerned to refrain from violence and hostile acts and to reach an immediate cease-fire and cessation of hostilities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. By unanimously adopting resolution 1016 (1995), it called on Member States involved in promoting a peace settlement to intensify their efforts with the parties, to ensure that they took no advantage from the current situation and showed utmost restraint.

The Council expressed deep concern at the military situation on the ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina and at the plight of the civilian population, which constituted a humanitarian crisis of significant proportions. It expressed special concern about the humanitarian consequences of the recent fighting, including loss of life and a new flow of refugees and displaced persons. The Council noted the assurances given by the Bosnian and Croatian Governments regarding offensive actions in western Bosnia.

A United Nations spokesman today reported that the recent offensive in western Bosnia had almost stopped, although resupply operations and minor skirmishes were continuing. The level of fighting around Doboj and Maglaj also decreased in the past 24 hours. There were fewer firing incidents in Sarajevo, and the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) continued to enjoy freedom of movement across the airport routes.

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The General Assembly today adopted a 164-item agenda for its fiftieth session. The agenda covers a wide range of political, disarmament, economic, social and humanitarian matters, as well as legal, administrative and budgetary questions.

The new items to be considered in plenary concern: cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union; report of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization; observer status for the Central American Integration system; multilingualism; cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation; World

Summit for Social Development; Universal Congress on the Panama Canal; and strengthening of the United Nations System.

In addition, a new item on the role of the Trusteeship Council will initially be considered in plenary and subsequently in the Sixth Committee (Legal). The Assembly will also consider a new sub-item on the sustainable use and conservation of the marine living resources of the high seas. Another new item, on normalization of the situation concerning South Africa, has not yet been allocated. Consideration of the question of Cyprus has also not yet been allocated.

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The International Court of Justice today dismissed New Zealand's request for an examination of the situation relating to France's nuclear testing in the South Pacific. The Court decided by 12 votes to 3 that the request did not fall within the relevant provisions of its 1974 judgement in a case between the two countries concerning nuclear testing. Consequently, New Zealand's request for provisional measures and applications for permission to intervene submitted by Australia, Samoa, Solomon Islands, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia were also dismissed.

New Zealand had requested the Court to declare that French nuclear tests would constitute a violation of the rights of New Zealand and other States, under international law, by introducing radioactive material into the marine environment. It had also sought a declaration that it would be unlawful for France to conduct nuclear tests at Mururoa and Fangataufa Atolls before undertaking an environmental impact assessment according to accepted international standards.

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The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will hold a round-table meeting of donors in Brussels on 25 and 26 September to mobilize resources for the peace process and development in Angola. The President of Angola, Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, will preside over the meeting. The leader of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), Jonas Savimbi, will also attend.

An estimated $700 million is needed to consolidate the Angolan peace process, revive the economy, rebuild infrastructure and improve living standards. More than 1.25 million Angolans were classified as internally displaced persons last year, while some 280,000 were refugees in neighbouring countries.

Special Representative Alioune Blondin Beye yesterday presided over a session of the Joint Commission in Luanda. The Commission, which reviews the peace process and implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, noted a significant

drop in the number of cease-fire violations. It also expressed satisfaction with the creation of a permanent military committee to monitor the military situation.

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General Mohamed Farah Aideed's forces have now released all of the international aid workers taken captive in Baidoa, Somalia, earlier in the week. The remaining 14 detainees - ten United Nations staff members and four non-government organization employees -- arrived today in Nairobi, Kenya.

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The Executive Board of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has recommended an increase of 5 per cent in the Fund's 1996 programme of work, which would bring it to over $434 million. It took that action at the end of its fifty-fifth session in Rome. The proposed increase should be formally endorsed by the IFAD Governing Council in January.

Almost $30 million would be extended in the form of technical assistance grants for technology development and transfer. The remaining $505 million would support a micro-lending programme for over 30 new projects in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

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The Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has recommended that UNCTAD IX be convened from 27 April to 11 May 1996 in Midrand, near Johannesburg, South Africa. The Board decided to hold a special preparatory session from 11 to 15 December, during which it will review the functioning of UNCTAD's intergovernmental machinery since 1992.

During its autumn session in Geneva, the Board also discussed such issues as global interdependence and prospects for the world economy, and the problem of unemployment in developed countries. In addition, the UNCTAD secretariat was asked to address the negative trade-related effects on neighbouring countries of United Nations economic sanctions on parts of the former Yugoslavia.

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